2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6



714 and one was held up by the bow paddler as the craft neared the
726 shore to protect him and those behind from arrows and stones cast by slings. When not in use, shields were laid away in boxes with some white substance resembling flour.[1] On the
[103] shore of the fiord below Bella Coola, opposite Winter Bay, there are some boulders of the same white tint; even now these are often spoken of as "The Shields of the Bella Coola." It is said that hostile raiders, seeing them, used to remark that they had reached the outposts of Bella Coola.

726 The same lack of leadership shown during preparations for
701 a war was evident during hostilities. The so-called leader had
703 little authority over his men, who could desert and return home at any time. Lack of martial ability among their own chiefs
[648] sometimes led the Bella Coola to place themselves under the
[642] authority of a Bella Bella in a way which would be impossible for a war-like people. Frequently such divided leadership led to disaster, and is the surest proof that the Bella Coola were not as aggressive or bellicose as other coastal tribes.

726 Except when attacking the Carriers, all raiding parties
[533] embarked in canoes and followed a definite order of procedure
[703] handed down from the past. In the stern of each craft sat the captain, a chief, who, as the craft was leaving, began to sing his *xe·tła* song, keeping time to it with the beats of his paddle; the recounting of the glories of their ancestors was supposed to encourage the warriors. Instead of leaving simultaneously, a rendezvous was often chosen down the fiord, and the expedition finally moved off from there when all the canoes had arrived. While still in friendly territory, a flotilla proceeded
726 openly. A small amount of dried salmon and water was car-
789 ried by a war party and morsels of the former were eaten at intervals. The bow-man took as much food and drink as he thought could be consumed at one sitting, put a fragment of dried salmon in his mouth, chewed it four times on the same side of his mouth as he was paddling, and swallowed it. Then

[1] Some undetermined substance said to have had protective or preservative qualities.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Tsimshian NE15



these accounts seemed to be exaggerations, and the casualties were probably few. The Bella Coola did not have the same admiration for the successful warrior as for the man who gave many potlatches, while everything indicates that their raids were on a small scale, rendered singularly ineffective by lack of discipline.

### Specific Accounts

Active warfare has been so long discontinued on the coast that none of the living Bella Coola can describe conditions as they existed during hostilities. It was possible to collect the following accounts of raids and adventures which, though individually of small value, illustrate warfare and warriors, and recount incidents which throw light on the frame of mind of the participants.

### Kitkatla War

For many years there was animosity between the Bella Coola and the Kitkatla who, with the advantage of strong government, used to sweep down from the north for salmon and slaves. Bella Coola itself was comparatively immune from attack, but the Kimsquit people suffered severely. The attackers were not always successful; one old man related how, when his mother's mother was an infant, they were driven off with the loss of four canoes and many men. The fact that this incident had been remembered for so many years indicates that it was unusual.

Slaves captured in this way were traded from tribe to tribe and rarely escaped. When an elderly Bella Coola was a lad, there was considerable excitement in the community owing to the return of *Stukwala*, a woman who had been carried off when a girl. She had been traded to a northern tribe among whom, she said, it was customary to crush captives beneath totem-poles and house-posts. Her diligence saved her from this fate, and she was passed on until she reached the far north, on the

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Carrier NE7



for *Qoixwelioti*'s death, that he was sure the wealthy man was really a sorcerer, and had used some evil means to cause the fisherman's drowning. *Qämälxem* was distantly related to the dead man and, thus incited, determined to kill *Nänätl* in revenge. That evening, as he was lying playing with his grandchild, the Carrier chief entered his house and thrust a musket against the unsuspecting man's chest. *Nänätl* quickly knocked down the muzzle so that the bullet, instead of killing him, merely passed through the fleshy part of his hips. *Qämälxem* made no attempt to run away. In such cases it rests with the relatives of the injured man whether or not to take revenge, and they usually avoid beginning a vendetta unless virtually driven to it. News of the assault spread down the valley, and two of *Nänätl*'s nephews, *Ťsä·kmai* and *Oƛmikmƛ*, went up to investigate. They were both men of considerable influence in the community, both validated warriors who had taken prominent parts in the unsuccessful attack on Kitkatla a few years before. Realizing that their uncle was not seriously wounded, the two brothers [illegible] canoe, intending to take him home and to disregard the assault.

During this time, the evil *Nusƛalst* man had been working on *Qämälxem*'s fears by telling him that *Nänätl* was certain to kill him by magical means, until he decided that he could escape only by murdering the wounded man. His followers learnt of this and tried to dissuade him, fearing the presence of the two famous warriors. As their canoe was going downstream, it was caught in an eddy and tipped so that one musket and both cartridge boards were lost. This seemed to *Qämälxem* the chance for which he had been waiting: he fired from the bank and *Nänätl* fell dead, much to the consternation of his own followers as well as the *Nusƛalst* people.

If *Ťsä·kmai* and *Oƛmikmƛ* had been ordinary men they would probably have fled downstream but, being duly validated men of valour, this course never occurred to them.[14] *Oƛmikmƛ*, who had one charge left in his musket, consulted his brother as to their course of action.

"*Nänätl* is dead," his brother replied. "It is probably time for us to die as well. You had better shoot."

Meanwhile *Qämälxem* had remained on the bank, laughing at the two warriors. *Oƛmikmƛ* told him to be silent, then fired, instantly killing his uncle's murderer. The Carriers began to run to and fro on the shore, whence they could hear the two brothers talking to each other:

"Let us not think of escaping," said one. "We have displayed our characters today. If we are to die, let us die."

[14] The man from whom this account was obtained mentioned as a matter of course that confirmed warriors could never run away; when questioned further, he emphasised that the public validation of bravery made it utterly impossible for them to flee from danger.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6



177 fathers. Inherited beliefs are too deep-rooted to pass away
771 entirely within a few generations. Even those who claim to
[181] have adopted the new faith remain convinced of the potency of magic, and of the existence of those supernatural creatures which do not actively conflict with the white man's creed. Such lack of consistency is a world-wide trait, particularly intelligible among the Bella Coola whose philosophy abounds in contradictions, dependent upon statements handed down in the origin myths of different families.

626 The Bella Coola are constrained not only by the omni-
[181] presence of supernatural beings; they are constantly subjected to the influence of their fellows. They are far less individual-
[622] istic than white people. A chief may boast that he can do as he pleases, that he can disregard the restrictions of lesser men; he often does so, but only because public opinion recognizes that he has reached a position of eminence by giving many potlatches. The duly validated warrior is brave because he
[703] feels that everyone is aware of his valour. The man who per-
[769] forms some ceremony in accordance with an ancestral myth incorporates himself with his forbears, and is strengthened by the conviction that he has gained their support and approbation. In every phase of life, a person is profoundly affected
177 by the approval or disapproval of his neighbours. At present
626 the construction of small houses, each occupied by a single
342 family, makes it possible for a man to hide himself, or to do work unknown to the rest of the community. This lessens the force of public opinion, although it is even now more potent than conscience in checking anti-social acts. Formerly, in communal houses, every action was fully known, making individual freedom of thought and act virtually impossible. A man
[602] is chiefly influenced by his relatives who take a great share in what the white man would consider purely family affairs. The effect of the group upon the individual must not be overlooked, nor can it be over-stressed in a study of these people.

177 The education and conversion of the younger men have
626 enormously lessened their reliance upon their fellows. In former
182
561

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NES Bellacoola NES



133 on the northern side of the Bella Coola valley, east of the Necleetsconnay. Before merging their waters with North Bentinck Arm the three flow more slowly and there are extensive tide-flats (see Plate 8). Several villages formerly clustered
361 around their mouths.

(1) *Qēmaux*: on the west bank of the Necleetsconnay about three-quarters of a mile from the sea. Nothing is known of this long-abandoned village of which even the name is uncertain. The mountain that rises behind its site is called *Qēmaux*, and it is supposed that the village had the same designation. Some of the older people state that there was no town, only a temporary hunting station, at this spot.

(2) *Tsiskēmy*, "Short Feet": on the very shore of North Bentinck Arm, west and north of the mouth of the Necleetsconnay. The fiord terminates in a tolerably square end, running north and south, and this town was at the northern edge. It was built on piles and the inhabitants could step to the ground only at low tide. This is the explanation given of the peculiar name, a reference to the curtailed walking space. Long ago it was a large town, but was probably occupied only
[166] during the winter. In summer the people are believed to have moved to *Namāmoc*, "The Place of Flies," on the north side of North Bentinck Arm, about one mile from its head.

[712] *(3) *Ēlpēlāxl*, "The Fenced Town," so called because it was stockaded: near the south bank of the *Fe xsh*, about a quarter of a mile from the sea, near the site of the present mission church. It was inhabited until about 1870. According to one informant this village was founded by a certain *Tāxlexwaus*, a descendant of *Taiaēmoic*, who decided to move close to the river.

(4) *Thelo-tl*, "Small Mound," so called from the knoll on which it was situated: above *Ēlpēlāxl*, and about one-half mile to the north of the present Bella Coola River. Its site is crossed by the road connecting the Indian village of Bella Coola with the white settlement of the same name.

2: McDermith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA



721 to attack. It is said that the Fort Rupert people once raided it, but their hair became entangled in the thorns growing near 648 the side-fort and they were easily slain while struggling to free themselves. Two warriors escaped and hid in the branches [727] of a huge spruce tree. They used to slip down at night and steal food, thus supporting themselves for several weeks, but [628] were at last discovered and enslaved. On such occasions the villages of the lower and central valley usually rallied to the help of *Semp-o-o*, the most exposed one, although there was no mechanism to enforce such assistance. The inhabitants of [774] this town attributed their protection to *Algaoiim*, and used to claim that he had decreed that they should be immune owing to their close association with him. Though Bella Coola [361] itself was comparatively free from molestation, *Kimsquit* and [162] *Talio*, with smaller populations and less strategic positions, were subject to frequent attacks. At least one of the villages at 712 the head of South Bentinck Arm was defended with a stockade of cedar trunks, set upright in a double row and secured by a water-gate with a drop-door.[1] This water-gate protected the [648] residents on many occasions, and it is remembered that one [724] Fort Rupert raiding-party was annihilated while endeavouring to batter down the door with a huge ram. The defenders, armed with muskets, picked off the attackers as they struggled in the open.

721 All the older men were emphatic in stating that most of their raids were in revenge for such attacks. Although such statements were partisan, they were confirmed in every way and were probably relatively correct. Lack of a strong govern- [642] ment was a serious handicap to the Bella Coola. After being [628] insulted, the members of the town would discuss retaliation, and if unanimity of opinion was reached, that course was de- [622] cided upon. Public opinion alone selected the leader, usually [701] a man who had given a number of potlatches, especially one whose position had been made stronger by previous validation

[1] It is said that such stockades surrounded other villages, but definite information on this point was unavailable.

2: McDermith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
BEA Bellacoola NEA
Tsimshian NE5
Kwakiutl NE10



learned. This ill-will has continued up to the present time. In 1920 word reached Bella Coola that Tsilcot had approached a Quesnel chief and asked him to spread the rumour that the missing party had been drowned at sea, as the same time admitting what had taken place. A year later a half-breed Canadian, hunting on Virgin Rocks, happened to unearth the bones buried beneath the log. There the matter rests for the moment so far as the Bella Coola are concerned, but they express the opinion that the continued ill-will may cause bloodshed at any time.

It must be remembered that the above account of the recent history with the Kitkatla is of a partisan nature. No attempt was made to hear the Kitkatla side of the matter, so that the version here given may or may not be the truth. It has been inserted as an illustration of Bella Coola attitude, and of the manner in which, formerly, disputes, hate and suspicions led to war. This would certainly have been the case in the present instance but for the restraining influence of the white man's rule.

## [illegible] WAR

Only slightly less feared than the Kitkatla were the Kwakiutl-speaking peoples, especially those inhabiting Knight's Inlet, Kingcome Inlet, and Blunden Harbour, who were known collectively as *Djaiktsaux*. As *Tsilcot* was feared among the northern raiders, so was *Hamit* among the southerners. Bella Coola itself was too difficult of access and too densely populated to be successfully attacked, but *Tal'o* was subject to numerous raids. Even more distressing was the constant danger of lurking enemies; one year it would be a hunter who was surprised and killed, the next a party of women would be carried off while picking berries.

The raiders became so bold that the inhabitants of one of the *Tal'o* villages decided to defend themselves by building a stockade. Everyone assisted in the task, so that the fortification was soon completed. It consisted of a fence of vertical logs with a platform running around near the top, on the inner side, on which the defenders could stand, and a water-gun through which canoes could even at high tide. It surrounded five or six houses and was planned as a place of refuge for all the *Tal'o* villages. One of the raiding-parties brought for the stockade was broken, and there was considerable discussion as to whether it should be used, but finally it was set up with the others. A Kwakiutl who was visiting *Tal'o* at the time took notice of this weakness, but no one seems to have suspected that he would inform his friends of it when he went home.

The summer after the stockade had been completed the Kwakiutl discussed the usual raid on *Tal'o*, one of the principal chiefs opposed an expedition on the ground of the reputed strength of the defence, but

[a famous Tsimshian chief = Anthony?]

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
NEA Bellacoola NEA



hair with white eagle-down. Warriors who on a war party need not drink more than four mouthfuls of water, else they would be killed. A watchman was appointed in each canoe, who sat in the bow. On landing near the village of their enemies they divided themselves into a number of parties, one house of the village being assigned to each. Then, early in the morning, when all were asleep, they rushed up to the village uttering their war cry 'wa!'. They took a stand at the fire which burns in the centre of the house, and if any one of the enemies succeeded in taking up his arms and came out of his bedroom they killed him. Then they entered the bedrooms, killed the men, and took the women and children along as slaves. The heads of the dead were cut off, the houses burnt, and they returned home singing war-songs. The heads which they had taken along were then washed, and the scalps tied to each end of a pole. When they approached their village one man stood up in the bow of each canoe and swung the pole to which the scalps were attached, and they all sang songs, to which their deeds were recounted. The scalps were called the higher the longer and fuller the hair. They were used in the dances.

The following tales of war expeditions offer some points of interest. About thirty or forty years ago there was a feuss at Bella Coola. The people went overland to Knight Inlet, which belongs to the Tenaqtaq, a tribe of the Kwakiutl, to fish there. The Tenaqtaq made fun of them, took from them the fish they caught, tore the blankets from the backs of the women, and ravished many of them. Finally the Bilqula returned home. There they held a council and resolved to make war upon the Tenaqtaq. The Tsimsh joined them in this expedition. They ordered the ascension to last four days. When they approached Knight Inlet they sent two spies in advance, who were to count the number of houses in the village of the Tenaqtaq. Early in the morning they attacked the houses and killed a great many men. The Tenaqtaq could not escape, as they were hemmed in by the river. The Bilqula slew them with knives, lances, and stone axes. They took away the children of the women, leaving them naked, and subjected them to shameful insults in revenge for the disgrace put upon their wives and daughters. Then they burnt the village.

About thirty-five years ago the Tsilxoa were attacked by the Kwakiutl. Originally they intended to attack Nuqalkx, but the seers, according to the narrator, changed their mind, as he always protects the village of Nuqalkx. They came in many canoes, while most of the Tsilxoa were at the lake, which is situated above that town, fishing. Four men were in charge of the village, and a number of old men and women had also remained at home. The father of Nuxkwiaia, who told one of these events, happened to be out picking berries, accompanied by his wife. He saw the canoes passing by and kept himself hidden. The village of Tsilx was at that time surrounded by a strong stockade, which consisted of a double row of palisades covered with thorns. At each corner there was a strong box fastened on the stockade like a tower. Here watchmen were stationed, who were able to shoot at the enemy while being themselves protected. At that time the Tsilxoa had only four guns. The Kwakiutl went out two spies, who reported that the village was well fortified. The Tsilxoa had seen the canoes coming and were on their guard. The Kwakiutl thought that they would not be able to enter the village until after the stockade had been destroyed.